

first program, but it really encourages States to develop their own work programs. And, unlike the Republican bill, the Deal substitute does not remove some existing mandates only to replace them with different mandates regarding payments for children born on welfare or payments to teenage mothers.

I believe that the Deal substitute offers the best approach to welfare reform. It takes a tough approach by setting time limits, and it requires people to be responsible for their own actions. It provides the necessary resources for welfare recipients to realistically achieve self-sufficiency, and I believe that the Deal substitute is the only welfare reform bill which gives the American people what they really want, which is a plan that makes work the number one priority, individuals responsible for their own actions, and welfare reform that gives the States the flexibility they need.

I thank the gentleman. I am sorry I am out of time.

WELFARE REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California [Ms. WATERS] is recognized for five minutes.

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, I have said maybe on two occasions today that this is one of the most important debates that this 104th Congress will be engaged in, and it is important for us to understand what we are about to do here.

I know there are a lot of unhappy folks in this country, unhappy about the fact that there are too many families and too many children on welfare. I know that most people want change.

We must be fair in our representations about who wants change. Republicans want change. Democrats want change. Workers want change, and recipients want change. I think it is one thing that we can agree on.

No one has the corner on wanting reform. We would all like to see reform in the system, and it is absolutely incorrect to say that the President or Democrats did not have a bill, did nothing about reform.

The President had a comprehensive piece of legislation that he attempted to get into this Congress, the 103d Congress, and we got caught up in the health debate, and it turned into a nightmare, and there was not the opportunity to move on welfare reform as the President had planned. So it is not true that the President did not want welfare reform.

The difference between the Democrat and Republicans is the question of implementation. How will we do welfare reform? Will it be a plan that will offer real opportunities for people to get off welfare or will it simply be a plan to punish folks because for whatever reasons they have found themselves on welfare?

I think it is time for us to try and speak about this in a language that the

American public can understand. No, they don't really understand block grants and waivers.

Let's put a face on this discussion. We are talking about, for the most part, just plain old poor people and working people. We are talking about people, some of whom were born into situations through no choice of their own that keeps them locked into the cycle of poverty, and there have been no real guidelines, rules by which they can get out of the cycle of poverty.

We have some folks who work every day, and they are poor. They can't take care of their families. They need food stamps. They need some help with their health care needs.

And so these are real people. These are not pawns that should be used by politicians to gain favor with people who are very vulnerable at this time. This should not simply be a political issue where some politician stands up and says vote for me. I am going to save you money. I am going to get rid of all these bad people.

And we should not have politicians simply defining all of America's problems by talking about the welfare state. And we certainly should not have politicians who talk about taking America's children and putting them in institutions, in orphanages.

We need to talk about these problems in a real way. Yes, there are teenage pregnancies, too many of them, and most of us don't like the idea that babies have babies. But we live in a society where sex is glamorized, where it is promoted, where it is expected. In order for young women to be looked upon with favor, they must be sexual. Young women are sought after by young men and old men, some of them in their neighborhoods, some out of their neighborhoods, some of them who are poor young men who have not very much to offer, some of them politicians and others. We know what is going on in American society.

We need sex education. We need jobs. Jobs have been exported to Third World countries for cheap labor. We need jobs for educated people and not-so-educated people. We need a better education system. We need to deal with the root causes of this problem, and we need to build into welfare reform the real opportunity for people to become independent by offering real jobs, job training and child care.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman's time has expired.

FOOD ASSISTANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina [Mrs. CLAYTON] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, this is a sad day in American history. The Republican Majority, with brute and brutal force, has begun a process to undo a half century of laws—laws that have taken this Nation from the depths of depression and malnutrition to soaring

heights of health. This process threatens the very strength of America. Federal nutrition programs were first started when it was realized that many of those poor upon whom we depended to join the military and defend us came to the job undernourished and poorly fed. If they could die for America, we reasoned, we should feed them while they were young.

This Personal Responsibility Act is irresponsible. It is irresponsible, for many reasons. I want to share five of those reasons with you. First, this Bill penalizes children. It penalizes children because, beginning immediately, fewer children than we now help and who need our help, will be helped. More than fourteen million children will receive less in food stamp benefits. More than six million children, born to younger mothers, will be denied benefits altogether. More than three million children, who do not know their fathers, will get reduced benefits, through no fault of their own. But, worse yet, more than 700,000 of those disabled children who received benefits last year will not receive benefits next year, under provisions of this Bill.

The Republican Majority will say they are making the system more efficient. The children born to children, without fathers and with disabilities, will simply suffer.

Second, this Bill has unfair work requirements. Because it does not clearly define the amount of compensation for the requirement to work, it could mean eighty hours of work for sixty-nine dollars in benefits—less than a dollar an hour. That is not fair. That is not just. That is not humane. At the very least, forced labor should require payment of the minimum wage. The Republicans will say that these workers may get a package of benefits worth as much as ten thousand dollars a year. That is deceptive. What about those who do not live in public housing? What about those who do not receive Medicaid? What about those who only get food stamps? What about child care costs? Those recipients will be forced to work for compensation far below the minimum wage. That does not encourage self-sufficiency. Third, the Bill puts people off welfare, without putting them to work.

Time limits for benefits, without job opportunities will not work. If an individual is able to work, we must insure that a job is available. Fourth, reasonable child care options should be a part of any work program. The Majority recognizes this by offering an amendment to increase the amount of money in the Bill for child care. But, the amendment falls far short. Under the Bill, there is a twenty percent cut in child care, affecting some 400,000 children. The amendment, if it passes, will put a small dent in those affected children. And, finally, but certainly not least, The Personal Responsibility Act creates block grants out of federal food assistance programs, thereby shifting the burden of nutrition programs to